

Oni Samuel & Agbude Godwyns (2011) “Determinants of Political Participation Among Women in Ogun State of Nigeria”. *Journal of Library Information Science & Technology*. Vol. 1. No.4. pp: 110-119. **Ebonyi State University**, Abakaliki.

### **Abstract**

*Political participation is at the heart of Democracy. The more people participate the more legitimate a democratic government is. Though political participation is found to be liberal and unrestrictive, research has shown that women who constitute more than half of the Nigeria's national population continue to suffer marginalization and discrimination. Empirical findings have revealed that women political participation in Ogun State remains at a dismal level as it recorded less than 10% women representation in the state's parliament in the 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2011 elections. The aim of the study, therefore, was to find out the specific factors responsible for the low level of political participation of women in Ogun State. The study generated both primary and secondary data. 200 questionnaires were administered among women in Ogun State. The study discovered that measure directed towards redressing the low political participation of women in the state will only be superficial unless the factors that limit women's political empowerment are addressed.*

### **1.0. Introduction**

The increasing agitations for gender equality have raised intense academic discourse on poor participation of women in politics all over the world (Peterson & Ruyan, 1999: 48 & Akinboye, 2004:233). Women's low political participation is a universal phenomenon (Waylen, 1996:11; Akinboye, op.cit:233; Lewu, 2005:62 & Rai, 2005). However the imperative of women participation in democratic governance cannot be over emphasized (Amadiume, 1997:81; Bruce, 2004:113; Babatunde, 2003; Bari, 2005). Sustainable democracy relies upon the equality and complementary participation of a men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society through political processes (Sodaro, 2001:247, Anifowose, 2004:205; Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2003). However, despite widespread democratization in most countries, women record poor participation in politics and decision making process across the world (Waylen, op.cit:10; Pokam, 2006; Henderson, 2006; Pascaud-Becane, 1999; Babatunde, op.cit; Anifowose, op.cit:204 & Bari, op.cit).

In Nigeria, although women constitute 48.78% of the national population, the average representation of women in national politics has hardly ever been more than 3% (Ajayi, 2007:138; IPU, 2007; Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition Shadow Report, 2008). The challenge of women's participation in Nigeria's politics became worrisome following the country's return to democracy in 1999. With the transfer of power from the military regime to a civilian democratic administration, one had expected a substantial improvement in women's political participation in the country. On the contrary, the percentage increase in women's political participation were 2%, 4% and 6% and women representation in the national parliament, 6.3%, 8.8% and 7.3% in 1999, 2003 and 2007 elections respectively (Okocha, 2007; Akioyede-Afolabi et' al, 2003; The Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition Shadow Report, op.cit:3 & Adu, 2008:27). It is obvious therefore, that the perception that democracy would automatically boost women's political involvement in Nigeria has not been validated after nine years of its return to civilian rule. The aim of this paper is therefore, to interrogate the determining factors of women's political participation in Ogun State between 1999 and 2007 and to seek ways on how to engender a balance in the political affairs of the state.

This paper is divided into seven sections. Section one is the introduction while section two explains the methodology of the study. Section three is the conceptual analysis. Section four on the other hand, examines women's participation in Nigeria's politics particularly, Ogun State. Section five discusses the factors responsible for low women's political participation as revealed by this study. In section six, this paper draws policy recommendations for improving women's political participation while section seven concludes this paper.

## **2.0. Methodology of the Research**

The study engaged primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data were collected through the use of well structured questionnaires and indepth interviews while secondary sources of data involved extensive and thorough library research and examination of existing literature, archival documents in the subject areas. A number of research questions were raised in the study. They include; what factors account for the low participation of women in Ogun State? And how can this trend be reversed with a view to raising the political profile of the womenfolk in Ogun State?

Quantitative and qualitative data were generated through field surveys and at the end, the results were compared with each other through the process of triangulation. The selection of sample size for administration of questionnaires was done through simple random sampling technique. A total of 200 women were randomly selected and 200 questionnaires administration on them. Out of this number, 173 (%) valid responses were received and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 15.) Statistical analyses include Chi-square, correlation and multiple regressions.

### **3.0. Political Participation: A Conceptual Discourse**

It is necessary to make a conceptual clarification of the term political participation in order to enhance our understanding of the subject matter. Political participation is one of the fundamental ideas of a democratic society and an essential component required for ensuring the stability and legitimacy of every political system (Agbaje, 1999:193; Kumari & Kidwai, op.cit: 12). It is the sine qua non of democracy because democracy involves a commitment to equal opportunity for men and women to develop their individual capacities. Political participation is crucial to the determination of the control of power and the extent to which individual members of society share, take part or get involved in the life of that society (Pateman, 1970; Agbaje, 1999:193). It occupies a vital place in democratic governance to the extent that its denial to substantial part of

the population can engender some negative reactions. Thus, democracy is inconceivable without political participation (Kumari & Kidwai, 1999:13; Agbaje, 1999:193; Anifowose, 2004:205).

Political participation, though central to democratic theory, the meaning of the term “participation” remains vague, complex and ultimately ambiguous ((Beck, 1997; Steiner, 1988; Bruce, 2004:106; Weale, 1999:84). Anifowose (2004:205) defines political participation as those voluntary activities such as holding public and party office, being a candidate for office, attending election campaigns, voting and exposing oneself to political stimuli. Similarly, Maclosky (1968) sees political participation as a series of voluntary activities through which members of a society share in the direct or indirect selection of rulers and formation of public policy. Sanghera, (2005) on the other hand, defines political participation as the active engagement by individuals and groups with the governmental processes that affect their lives. This encompasses both involvements in decision-making and acts of opposition. Lewu (2005:63) however, defines political participation as a variety of ways in which people try to exercise influence over the political process. For Lawson & Wasburn (1969), political participation ‘is the process by which individuals acting singly or through group organisation attempt to influence decision-making or alter the manner in which power may be distributed and the principles by which it may be exercised in a particular society’.

Researchers have observed various forms of political participation and various extralegal institutions through which ordinary people can participate in politics; however, practitioners of politics commonly emphasize voting as a critical and essential aspect of authentic participation (Kumari & Kidwai, 1999:12; Isumonah, 2004:7; Llein, 2005). On the contrary, however, voting is the minimal form of political participation. Political participation can take many other forms besides voting, such as joining a political party, standing as candidates in elections, joining a

non-governmental advocacy group, exercising control over which issues should emerge on the political agenda or participating in demonstration (Kumari & Kidwai, 1999:25; Weale, 1997:214).

Almond & Verba (1963:154) identified fourfold typology of political partisanship. The first type of partisanship is the open partisan. The open partisan is emotionally inclined towards politics. He is emotionally involved in campaigns but not so intensely as to detach from relating with members of other parties. The second partisan is the apathetic partisan who expresses no feeling of anger, pleasure or contempt about politics. The Intense partisan on the other hand, is actively involved and emotionally attached to electoral contests. The fourth type of partisanship is the parochial partisan who is indifferent about elections and relatively uninvolved in politics (Almond, et 'al, 1963:155). Sanghera (2005) and Magstadt (2006) on the other hand, identify two forms of political participation (1) Legal forms of political participation and (2) illegal or contentious forms of political participation.

Sanghera (op. cit) and Magstadt (op. cit) further categorise legal forms of participation into conventional political participation and unconventional political participation. A conventional form of political participation refers to routine, an institutional and regular form of political actions, most visible of which is voting. Attending political rallies, responding to political polls, standing for office and campaigning for a political party are other forms of conventional political participation (Magstadt; 2006:313). Unconventional forms of political participation are any form of political action that is though legal but are considered as inappropriate by a majority of citizens. Such forms of participation are signing a petition and attending a peaceful demonstration of interest groups (Sanghera, 2005; Magstadt (op. cit: 314)). the illegal means of political expression includes such forms as civil disobedience, political terrorism, subversion and

sedition, violent protest, riots, rallies, marches and revolutions and refusal to pay taxes (Sanghera, op. cit; Magstadt, op. cit:314). From the foregoing analysis therefore, it is obvious that individuals adopt different modes of participation in politics depending on personal interests and propensities and opportunities available.

There is nowhere in the world where women's political power equate with that of men and for ages, women remain at the sideline of political participation (Awe, 1992; Waylen, 1996; Nwankwo, 1996, Unumeri, 2003, Abdu, 2003, Johnson, 2003). New Zealand was the first country to allow women to vote and that did not happen until in 1893. In the United States of America however, women did not enjoy franchise until 1920, and similarly, Britain did not allow women franchise until 1928. Political right was not granted women in France until 1944, while Italy, 1945 and China 1947. Nigerian women enfranchisement did not come until 1959 while in Switzerland women were not allowed to vote until 1971 (Ajayi, 2004:138). For the first time in history in 1919 the American born Lady Nancy Astor became the first elected women to take her seat in the British parliament after fulfilling certain age and property requirements (Johnson, 2003). While women's dedicated efforts to challenge the status quo have allowed more women to reach positions of power in recent years, women continue to face significant barriers to their full and equal participation in the structures and institutions which govern their lives (Omotola, 2007; Ajayi, 2007; The Nigeria CEDAW NGO Coalition Shadow Report, 2008).

Several national and international mechanisms have been put forward to encourage women's participation in politics. These include among others the International Women's Year set up in 1975, the UN Decade for Women (1976 – 1985), the Voluntary Fund for the UN Decade for Women, the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 held in Beijing, China, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which became effective in 1981, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)

*etcetera* (Peterson & Runyan, 1999:11; Akiyode-Afolabi et al, 2003; Akinboye, 2004:13; Rai, 2005:3; Omotola, 2007:33; Oyekanmi, 2004:44; Kukah, 2003:163; Akinboye, 2004:13). These events marked a watershed in human resource development as women were brought into developmental focus. Paradoxically however, despite the increasing involvement of women in political activities and the acknowledged women's crucial role in nation building, the prevailing trend witness a seeming aberration which put limitations on women participation in political activities (Akinboye, 2004:14). Most countries of the world still fall short of the critical mass of 30% women political representation (IPU, 2005).

#### **4.0. Women's Participation in Politics of Ogun State.**

There have been various degrees of women's participation in Nigeria's politics and governance and varying sets of limiting factors to their full involvement in the mainstream political development of the nation. Although women's political participation during pre-colonial era of Nigerian societies was not equal to that of men, the position of women in traditional political governance was complementary rather than subordinate (Mba, 1982:37; Nwankwo, 1996:20 & Ikpe, 2004:23; Akinboye, 2004:236; Ajayi, 2007; Kamene, 1991; Awe, 1992:11). The extent of women's political participation however, depended on how their particular society was organized, whether in the form of monarchy like the Yoruba kingdom or as republican like the Igbo tribes (Nwankwo, 1999:14). The complementarity's role of women was however embedded in sex segregation, which determined gender position, status and power in the society and provided them their own spheres of operation and control (Olojede, 1990:82; Ikpe, 2004:22).

However, the advent of colonial administration destroyed women's political positions and then marginalized and subordinated them under the men, hence the subsequent entrenchment of masculinity of politics in Nigeria (Allen, 1972; Omotola, 2007; Lewu, 2005:65; Mba, 1982;

Ikpe, 2004:30). The creation of patriarchy government by colonial administration in which women were not allowed to hold any authoritative positions, its gender policies and economic interests which eroded female participation both in politics and economy reinforced and generalized patriarchal values and perpetuated gender inequality in Nigeria (Kamene, 1991, Mba, 1982; Olojede, 1999 & Ikpe, 2004:30, Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2003:77; Akinboye, 2004:237). In fact while women in South Western Nigeria voted for the first time in the nation's electoral history in the 1959 general elections, their Northern counterparts did not enjoyed franchise rights until 1976, fifty-four years after the elective principle was introduced to Nigeria (Ajayi, 2004:138). These practices significantly marked the beginning of women's alienation from the mainstream Nigeria's politics, a phenomenon that has continued till date (Enemuo, 1999:232; Allen, 1972; Ajayi, 2007:138).

Women political activism such as the Aba women riot against colonial tax policies of 1929/30, the Ngwa women's opposition against the municipalisation of their community in 1954, the Eastern Region women's opposition to new school fees in 1958; and the series of protests between 1946 and 1958 by the Abeokuta Women's Union led by Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti though were invaluable in the country's struggle for independence (Nwankwo, 1996:16; Adu, 2008:27). However, the limited gains made by women did not translate into participation in decision making during this colonial period. Men dominated in the first political parties. Women did not feature prominently in the leadership of the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP), National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) and other parties during the nationalist era and after independence (Ahonsi-Yakubu, 2001:151). In the 1958 elections only Wurola Esan got appointed to the Senate of 36 members, while no woman was elected to the 312-member House of Representatives and none was in the federal cabinet (Nwankwo, 1996:17).



The low participation of women in politics was also fostered by the nature of post-colonial politics. The ethnic and personality based, paternalistic and acrimonious politics and political parties of the post-independence era were detrimental to women's participation (Ojo, 2003; Aina, 2004:227; Ikpe, 2004:35). Thus, from 1960, there were only four female legislators in the whole of the country, a number that was so negligible as to give women the necessary influence over decision-making (Nwankwo, 1996:17, Omotola, 2007:37). The imposition of military, an era that followed this period from 1966 did not foster women's participation in politics and very little was heard of women at the helm of affairs (Anyia, 2003). Military rule was an all-male affair and while it lasted women played only a peripheral role (Adeleke, 2002; Babatunde, 2003; Aina, op.cit:227).

Ogun State came to existence on February 3, 1976 following the creation of additional seven to the existing twelve state structure by the Murtala/Obasanjo military regime. The state though one of the most politically vibrant states in the federation being replete with political icons as indigenes such as Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Chief Simeon Adebo, Tai Solarin, Professor Olikoyi Ransome-Kuti, Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, Chief MKO Abiola, Senator Afolabi Olabintan, Chief Bisi Onabanjo, Ernest Shonekan, Oladipo Diya, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo (Ajayi, 2008). Women constitutes 51% (1193, 663 out of 2, 338, 570) of the state total population (1991 Census). This however, has not received a women commensurate involvement in its political system. Since the creation of the state, women have been struggling to be involved in its political development (Okome, 2000).

Prior to the creation of the state, the Sole Native Authority (SNA) that was established in 1914 by the British Government in the Western region of Nigeria had eradicated women's ruling position in the entire region. Not only were they denied leadership positions, they were also excluded from any decision-making process (Adu, 2008:57). A few women's titles such as

Iyalode and Erelu remained but they were devoid of power. For these women chiefs, the limited entree that allowed the male chiefs to participate in the Native Authority system was non-existent. The political activism of Egba women under the auspices of Abeokuta's Ladies Club (ALC), which evolved into Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU) led by Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti between 1946 and 1958 against the despotism and exclusionary politics of the Sole Native Authority (SNA) system, is significant in the history of women's political participation in Nigeria; a women political organization that later gave birth to Nigerian Women's Union (NWU) (Nwankwo, 1999:16). Though, Egba women gained political participation by the appointment of four women to the Egba Central Council that replaced the SNA, they were only able to generate a limited degree of change in the colonial policy of excluding women (Okome, 2000).

The independence of Nigeria from colonial rule did not necessarily lead to the reorganization of power in the region. The political systems although reformed, still maintain a remarkable sameness with colonial systems. Thus women in Ogun state like other states of the federation were not in the military hierarchy and therefore had little or no involvement in the legislative and executive body combined in the various military ruling councils. The Murtala/Obasanjo administration which created the state appointed Mrs. Womiloju Idowu as head of the Ogun State government during the final stage of the transition to civilian rule. She was however, the only woman so appointed. During this period, 51.3 percent of the registered electorate were women, five of the 52 associations formed were led by women, but none was registered by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO) (Williams, 1997:224).

With the adoption of democratic rule in 1999, the position of women in Ogun state has only slightly improved. Although women actively participated in the membership of political parties, they only served in the lower cadres of social welfare and supporters for the male to acquire the political positions (Olateru-Olagbegi & Akiyode-Afolabi, 2003). The state did not appoint any

female commissioners out of the 14-member State Executive Council throughout the first four-year term of the fourth republic (1999 - 2003), and no women representation in the 26-member State House of Assembly during this period. While there was no woman out of the 20 local Government Chairmen, there were only 6 women out of the 236 councilors in the state.

The poor performance of women across Nigeria in the 1999 elections was the basis for the national summit for all women politicians organised by the International Human Rights Law Group, Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) and Gender and Development Action (GADA) held on June 28, 2002 in Abuja. The objective of the summit was to enhance women's active participation in Nigerian politics (Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade, 2003:64). Furthermore there were increased awareness campaigns by these and other gender-related organisations and NGOs to spore women in the federation to vie for political candidature in the 2003 and 2007 general elections which helped to increase the level of women's political literacy. In a similar dimension, in order to enhance women's involvement in Nigeria's political administration, the Obasanjo administration took conscious affirmative actions which led to the decision by the political parties to waive for the women, the payment of pre-registration levies for political aspirants in the country.

Women's political participation in the state however, made a historic record in 2003 when Alhaja Salmot Makanjuola Badru and Mrs. Titi Oseni became the Deputy-Governor of the state and Speaker of the State House of Assembly respectively. The choice of Hon. Titi Oseni as the Speaker was yet another milestone as the first in the political history of the South West and only the female Speaker in the whole of the country. During that period however, Mrs. Titi Oseni was the only female out of the 26 members of Ogun State House of Assembly. The local government elections that held in 2004 did not record any significant improvement as there was only 1 female out of the 20 local government chairpersons and 15 out of the 236 councillors in

the state. In 2007, Mrs. Titi Oseni was re-elected as the speaker of the State House of Assembly. She and Mrs. Tunrayo A. Adeleye-Oladapo were the only 2 female out of the 26 members of the State House of Assembly. In the same vein, Alhaja Salmot Makanjuola Badru was reelected the Deputy Governor of the State. Mrs. Titi Oseni had however ceased to be the Speaker of the House. The State Ministry of Health and Women Affairs and Social Welfare have women as their commissioners. Thus there were only 3 women out of the 19-member State Executive Council and 1 woman among the 20 special advisers to the State Government. Women's representation at the local government did not take any different dimension from the previous tenure as there was only 1 woman out of the 20 local government chairmen and 18 councilors out of the 236 wards in the state. Despite the improvement in the level of women's involvement in the state's politics, however, the analysis above shows that their participation in politics of Ogun State remains majorly at the peripheral level. The next section examines the factors determining women's political participation in Ogun State.

There is nowhere in the world where women's political power equates that of men and for ages, women remain at the margins of political participation (Awe, 1992; Waylen, 1996; Nwankwo, 1996, Unumeri, 2003, Abdu, 2003, Johnson, 2003). New Zealand was the first country to allow women to vote in 1893. In the United States of America however, women did not enjoy franchise until 1920, and similarly, Britain did not allow women franchise until 1928. Political right was not granted women in France until 1944, while Italy, 1945 and China 1947. Nigerian women's enfranchisement came in 1959 while in Switzerland, women were not allowed to vote until 1971 (Ajayi, 2004:138). For the first time in history in 1919, the American born Lady Nancy Astor became the first elected women to take her seat in the British parliament after fulfilling certain age and property requirements (Johnson, 2003). In 2004, women in Rwanda topped the world rankings of women in national parliaments, with 49 % of representation compared to a world

average of 15.1 % (IPU, 2006). In 2006, Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf became Africa's first elected women head of state.

While women's dedicated efforts to challenge the status quo have allowed more women to reach positions of power in recent years, women continue to face significant barriers to their full and equal participation in the structures and institutions which govern their lives (IPU, 2006; Omotola, 2007; Ajayi, 2007 & Nigeria CEDAW, 2008).

Several national and international mechanisms have been put forward to encourage women's participation in politics. These include among others the International Women's Year set up in 1975, the UN Decade for Women (1976 – 1985), the Voluntary Fund for the UN Decade for Women, the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 held in Beijing, China, the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which became effective in 1981, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) *etcetera* (Peterson & Runyan, 1999:11; Akiyode-Afolabi et al, 2003; Akinboye, 2004:13; Rai, 2005:3; Omotola, 2007:33; Oyekanmi, 2004:44; Kukah, 2003:163; Akinboye, 2004:13; Rai, 2005:3).. These events marked a watershed in sustainable democracy as women were brought into developmental focus. Paradoxically however, despite the increasing involvement of women in political activities and the acknowledged women's crucial role in nation building, the prevailing trend witnessed a seeming aberration which put limitations on women participation in political activities (Akinboye, 2004:14). Most countries of the world still fall short of the critical mass of 30% of women political representation (IPU, 2006).

## **5.0. Data Analysis**

Data gathered on the determinants of women's political participation in our case study were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 15.) Statistical analyses include Chi-square, correlation and multiple regressions. We first present the socio-demographic information of the respondents. This is depicted in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1. Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>Age Distribution of Respondents</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18 - 30	75	39.9
30 - 40	52	30.6
41 and above	43	27.7
<b>Distribution of Marital Status of Respondents</b>		
<b>Status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Single	50	28.9
Married	86	49.7
Divorced	11	6.4
Widow	27	15.6
<b>Occupational Distribution of Respondents</b>		
<b>Place of Work</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Government Establishments	57	32.8
Private Establishments	68	39
NGOs	15	8.7
Others (students & unemployed)	32	18.5
<b>Educational Distribution of Respondents</b>		
<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Tertiary Education	152	88
Secondary School Education	20	12
Primary School	2	1.2

The above analysis shows that more of the respondents were above 31 years of age. A total of 95 (54.6%) of the respondents is in this group. This afforded the researcher the opportunity to gather very useful information since individuals between this age are experienced and are expected to have a substantial knowledge about the field of study in both states. On educational qualification, 150 (86 %) of the respondents had education up to tertiary level while 20 (12%) had maximum of secondary education and only 2 respondents have primary School education. This shows a high level of literacy among the respondents; hence respondents understood what the study was about and therefore able to contribute to the issue of low women's political participation in the State.

The correlational and multivariate results of the data show the factors affecting women's political participation in our case study. Table 5.2 indicates the variation in the responses of persons on the determining factors of low participation of women in Ogun state politics.

**Table 5.2. Response to Specific Issues**

Variables	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Education	14	8.09	44	25.43	9	5.20	56	32.37	50	28.90
Financial Resources	12	6.94	24	13.87	27	15.61	64	36.99	46	26.59
Patriarchy system	14	8.09	44	25.43	5	2.89	70	40.46	40	23.12
Male Domination	8	4.62	32	18.49	7	4.04	56	32.36	70	40.46
Women's Subordinate role	20	11.56	31	17.91	-	-	62	35.83	60	34.68
Religion	22	12.71	34	19.65	3	1.73	58	33.52	56	32.36
Family Responsibilities	16	9.24	26	15.02	1	0.57	56	32.36	74	42.77
Colonial legacies	26	15.02	30	17.34	50	28.90	40	23.12	27	15.60
Military government	28	16.18	32	18.49	44	25.43	41	23.69	28	16.18
Majority Electoral System	14	8.17	20	11.56	13	7.51	74	44.77	52	30.05
Absence of Quotas system	16	9.24	12	6.93	9	5.20	70	40.46	66	38.15
Absence of gender equality	14	8.09	16	9.24	2	1.15	71	41.04	70	40.46

*Source: Field Reports, December 2008*

The results of the statistical tests showed in table 5:3 below reveals the factors responsible for the low political participation of women in Ogun State.

**Table 5:3. Statistical Tests of Factors Determining Women's Participation in Ogun State politics**

Factors	Form of Statistical Test	F- Value	Sig
Socioeconomic factors	Chi-Square	47.264	0.000
Cultural factors	ANOVA	7.290	0.000
Historical Heritage	ANOVA	3.694	0.029
Institutional Designs	Correlation	.662 (**)	0.000

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Predictors: (constant), Socioeconomic, cultural, historical legacies, institutional Designs

Dependent Variable: Women's political participation

We hypothesized in the study that the low women's political participation in Ogun State is not influenced by their education and financial level. The chi-square test of respondents to the various questions on the influence of some socioeconomic variables on women's political participation in the State is indicated in Table 5.3.

The result of the Chi-square test indicated a  $\chi^2$  value of 47.264 at the associated significant level of 0.0001 which is far less than the conventional significant level of 0.05. This hypothesis is therefore rejected. Hence it is established that education and financial factors have significant influence on women's political participation in Ogun State. From the study, financial resources and literacy level are found to affect women's political participation in Ogun State. Women are unwilling to commit their financial resources to political activities since the likelihood of being supported by their political parties and men counterparts is low. Women would rather prefer to invest in their children and other family responsibilities as well as in some economic activities where they are positive of returns. The awareness campaign and other orientation activities of Gender and Development Action (GADA), Gender Rights Advancement and Development (GRAND), Civil Liberties Organization, Rural Women Empowerment Network (RUWEN), Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP) and Women in Nigeria (WIN) have created political awareness among women in the state. This awareness however, has not translated to women's significant representation in the state.

Patriarchy system and male domination in the society are among the factors tested for low political participation. The study hypothesized that these factors do not contribute to low women's political participation in Ogun State. Table 5.3 illustrates the multiple regression test of respondents to the various questions in respect of this hypothesis.



The result of the multiple regression test above (ANOVA table) indicates 7.290 Fcal value for Ogun state at the associated significant level of 0.000 which is far less than the conventional significant level of 0.05. This hypothesis is therefore rejected thus established a significant relationship between cultural factors and the low women's political participation in Ogun State. These cultural heritages have relegated women to be subordinate to men and has created women's inferiority complex. These age long practices have entrenched in the societal perception almost as legal norms. Another key factor that limits women's political participation in Ogun State is the culture of political godfatherism, thuggery and gangsterism which made the political terrain too dangerous for the female gender to tread. In addition, the society's believes that politics is for men and only loose women get involved constitute a barrier to women's featuring in the state's mainstream politics. Women who get involved in it are stigmatized by fellow women and most men as a result would not encourage their wives to be involved in politics. This situation is further worsened by the practice by political parties of holding meetings at odd periods, e.g. nocturnal meetings.

Three historical legacies are key factors that are particularly relevant in this context. These include religious heritage, legacies of colonial and military administration and family responsibilities. The result of the multiple regression test (ANOVA) of the relationship between these factors and the low involvement of women in Ogun State politics indicates Fcal value of 3.694 at the associated significant level of 0.029. This is depicted in Table 5.3. This therefore rejected our hypothesis 3 that Nigerian historical legacies do not contribute to low women's political participation in Lagos and Ogun States. It thus established that Nigerian historical legacies significantly contributed to the low women's political participation in Ogun State..

Religion heritages, institutional arrangements that restrict women to family responsibilities and the exclusion of women from colonial administration and military rules in the country have created a legacy that limit the improvement of women's political participation in Ogun State. While protestant religion are beginning to encourage women's prominence in public life, religious orthodoxy however, continues to place limitation on the extent of female's featuring in political activities. The mechanism of sex segregation and *pudah* are found to restrict women's empowerment by limiting their exposure to interact with male and female constituents and to attend public meetings. All of these factors correlate to hinder women's political involvement from going beyond the conventional level of voting to the mainstream politics.

There are some Nigerian institutional designs that create political structures that affect women's political participation in the mainstream politics. These include the practice of majority electoral system in the place of proportional representation, lack of gender electoral quota systems and constitutional provision for equal gender representation in political parties' political nominees. We hypothesized that there is no relationship between Nigerian political structures and women's participation in Ogun State' politics The Pearson correlation test of the relationship between these political structures and women's participation in Ogun State' politics shows a tcal value of 0.662 at the associated significant level of 0.0001. Table 5.3 shows summary result of the test

The result of this test rejected this hypothesis thus, established strong correlation between those Nigerian political structures and women's participation in the state' politics. All these institutional designs impede women's significant involvement in the state's political activities. Though affirmative action and gender equality have been appreciated in the country, an idea that is instrumental to the decision by political parties to waive for the women the payment of pre-registration levies for political aspirants during Obasanjo administration, however, there is

hitherto no conscious efforts made by the government for the entrenchment of such as constitutional policies for implementation in Nigeria. Over the years governments of the country have paid lip service to global campaign for women's empowerment by both local and international organizations on gender equality as there are no specific guidelines and modalities of affirmative actions in Nigeria.

## **6.0. Policy Recommendations**

On the basis of findings of this study, the following policy recommendations are suggested for enhancing women's political participation in Nigeria and Ogun State in particular.

Nigeria is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Therefore CEDAW recommendations as contained in its Article 1 - 16 should be implemented immediately. This will expunge the conflicting and discriminatory provisions in Nigerian Statutory, Customary and Religious laws that reinforce male supremacy and perpetuate patriarchal system in Nigeria.

There should be a reformation of customary and religious institutions in Nigeria so as to avoid discrimination against women's involvement in public life. The patriarchal structures that reinforce power imbalance between women and men should be dismantled. Government should therefore integrate all statutory, religious and customary laws and practices that subordinate women to men.

An Electoral bill explicitly specifying and clarifying guidelines for modalities and implementations of affirmative actions that enhance women's empowerment should be passed into in the country. For instance, 50% of financial cost of registration as a candidate for political positions and election campaign should be borne by the government. Every national political

party should reserve 30% of all elective positions for women. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) should ensure that this policy is obeyed and any political party that fails to follow it should be disqualified.

There is a clear consensus in literature and among respondents in this study that electoral quota system is an effective tool for addressing low women's political representation. There should be constitutional provision for electoral quota system of 30% of the seats in the National Assembly, States' House of Assembly and Local Government Councils in Nigeria reserved for women in Nigeria.

Government should partner with women's movements, NGOs, the mass media and the civil society to embark on aggressive awareness and enlightenment campaign against women subordination, discrimination, stigmatization and societal perception that women are inferior to men. The Ministry of Women Affairs should have a periodic campaign programme in this regard. Education of women is useful to destroy inferiority complex and to give aspiring women courage and confidence to compete with men. Women education should target the adult population both in the cities and rural areas. Ogun State Governments should therefore establish evening and week-end education programme in the states for adult women who as a result of one limitation or the other could not attend the formal education. National Youth Service Corps members posted to the state should be engaged in this programme instead of deploying them to various organisations where they are rejected or redundant for a whole year of their services. Graduates who roam about the streets in search for jobs can also be meaningfully engaged in this programme.

The Ministry of Women Affairs and other government machinery for women's advancement and development should be strengthened by equipping them with modern information storage and research facilities to investigate and document the situation of women in Ogun State.

Economic empowerment strategies such as loan scheme with minimal interest rates should be made available for women particularly in the grassroots to enable them embark on small and medium scale business enterprise. Commercial and microfinance banks should be mandated to remove the stringent regulations that make loans inaccessible for the common man. Government should give directive to these financial institutions to give special priority to women who seek loan for small and medium scale enterprise.

Child care and other social facilities such as healthcare services, Daycare services, Nursery and Kindergarten Schools should be provided in the various major towns with affordable charges to reduce the burden on women who have to bear the responsibility for family and community sustenance in addition to their major role as wives, mothers and economic contributors. These facilities will help free women for effective participation in the public sphere and make them available for more productive ventures.

The current majority electoral system should be changed in favour of proportionate representation. This will not only encourage political parties to field women as candidates for second seats, it will also reduce the "do or die" political struggle among political parties engendered by the principle of "winner takes all" that is characteristic of majority electoral system.

Lastly the creation of a political environment supportive of and conducive for women's participation is a responsibility of the government. Government must curb the culture of electoral

violence and the use of political thugs and gangsters to suppress and witch-hunt political opponents in the state. Election Task Force should be established by the government with membership drawn from The Nigerian Police should be on ground throughout election periods for immediate investigation of the use of political thugs and gangsters during political campaigns and voting by political parties or aspirants, and conviction of such acts through the adjudication of Election Tribunal should lead to automatic disqualification of such political party or aspirants by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

## **7.0. Conclusion**

This paper has examined women's participation in politics in Ogun State between 1999 and 2007. Despite the state is one of the most politically vibrant and enlightened state in Nigeria, women's political representation in the state's politics still remain at a dismal level. Socioeconomic factors, political structures, historical heritages, political thuggery and gangsterism, societal norms and beliefs have created a culture that alienates women from the main stream of the state's politics. The imperative of democratic consolidation in requires that women, who constitute 51% of the state's population, should find prominence in the mainstream political development of the state since democracy is only achievable on the altar of popular participation of every citizen of the society, males and females alike. It is therefore conclusive in this paper that any corrective measure adopted to address the low participation of women in politics will only be superficial unless the socioeconomic, cultural and political factors that limit their empowerment are decisively addressed.

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## **Challenges Facing Women's de Jure Equality in the 21st Century:**

So what are the challenges that women in politics face[30]? At the outset, the difference between de jure and de facto itself is a significant feature. In many, if not most, countries of the world, translating that which one is entitled to on paper (whether that is a Constitution, a law, or any legal document) to that which one can actually achieve is in itself a major challenge. However, it is important to highlight that this is not just a feature of women's rights, but actually one of all human rights issues. The word of law therefore remains elusive, but it is nevertheless one of the most important empowering mechanisms for the achievement of rights.

Also worthy of note is the fact that few of the challenges to women's *de jure* equality in the 21st century are really new. On the contrary, many of them have been passed down, so to speak, from previous generations. Nevertheless, some, such as access to technology, are a feature of scientific breakthroughs characteristic of the last 20 years only.

Challenges differ according to countries and regions, and even within one country they are not always of the same features. Recent events in Russia for instance, with the political murder of one of the country's few liberal and outspoken promoters of democracy, indicate that the issue of political corruption and ensuing fear, will be major future challenges in this part of the world. Whereas the relative silence of certain female politicians in some Asian countries, in the face of political manipulation and intrigue, are indicators of other forms of constraints and consequent calculations. For the sake of simplifying what could be a long and interminable list therefore, the challenges are broken down into social/cultural, economic, and political spheres[31] .

### **Social/Cultural:**

Despite the fact that 'culture' and debates about it, have elicited an entire discipline within the social sciences, it still remains an elusive concept to define. However, for practical purposes, it can be assumed that culture encompasses particular lifestyles derived from history, perceived traditions, as well as both a product of and a motor for contemporary social and political dynamics. In short, therefore, culture is that which surrounds us and plays a certain role in determining the way we behave at any given moment in time. By no means a static concept, culture defines and is both defined by events that are taking place both locally as well as regionally and internationally, it is shaped by individual events as well as collective ones, and it is a feature of the time or epoch we live in. Because it is so vast, culture is also often used as a tool to validate all manners of actions - not, all of which may be acceptable to all concerned - and are often intimately, connected to issues of identity. Cultural frameworks are not always imposed, but are open to manipulation and interpretation from many angles and sources.

A significant social feature resides in the double - if not triple - responsibilities of women: In most countries, women are perceived to have 'primary' responsibilities as wives and mothers. But in many cases, either as a result of a preference for personal development, or out of sheer economic necessity, women also go out to work in the employment market. Hence, a political career may well come in these cases either as a second or third job[32] . Juggling these different occupations and their consequent responsibilities is no easy task for anyone - man or woman.

Societal perceptions regarding the traditional division of labour, where women are seen as bound to certain functions only, are also an important barrier that many women the world over face. This idea is closely connected with a definition and understanding of space as dichotomised

between the public and the private spheres, where women are meant to belong to the latter. These notions are remarkably persistent, and are at the basis of much of the difficulties women face not only entering into the political sphere, but also gaining credibility and impacting from within it.

The stigma of politics as ‘dirty’ is somewhat connected to the previous notion, but is also more specific to certain countries where political scandal and intrigue dominate the headlines. Russia, with the latest events related to the murder of the woman Member of Parliament, in addition to rife rumours about Mafia involvement, is a good example.

Provision of social services and a support network based on family-friendly considerations are still lacking in many countries. There are many success stories of how women’s actual involvement in politics have impacted favourably on this area which will be elaborated in the following sections. But it remains an important requirement if women are to be able to overcome the difficulties of the double/triple responsibilities and stereotyped roles.

Illiteracy is another problem. According to the UNDP 1995 Human Development Report, out of the developing world’s 900 million illiterate people, women outnumber men two to one, and girls constitute the majority of the 130 million children without access to primary school. Further, because population growth has superseded the expansion of women’s education in some developing regions, the number of women who are illiterate has actually increased[[33](#)] .

### **Economic:**

In many countries of the South, the greatest challenges for human development in general, and women’s participation in public life in particular, are the changes in a global economic market, poverty and illiteracy. Although it is a commonly held refrain that economic and political development go hand in hand, the situation of women’s empowerment in some countries with a high per capita income, such as some of the oil producing states, disproves this commonly held belief.

Hence, there is no one country, which claims to be satisfied with the situation of women’s political participation. Even in Sweden, with a high per capita income and standard of living, and hailed as a model for other nations of the world with its gender equality policies and its over 40% female parliamentary representation, there are still many complaints of certain entrenched (and often subtle) macho attitudes towards women gaining influence.

Poverty is seen as a major impediment largely because it means that women are, or become, more concerned with earning their daily living than following any specific political development. Moreover, the process referred to as the feminisation of poverty means that most of those affected tend to be women, so how can they be expected to find the time to actively participate in a political process? Worse still, the question needs to be asked whether there is any direct advantage accruing to these women from having women politicians as yet?

Another factor is the lack of adequate financial resources that women tend to have access to. The impact of this can be felt primarily when financing electoral campaigns, as well as the ability of women politicians to undertake certain initiatives. Although a major recommendation of many international gatherings is that both political parties as well as governments attempt to provide and set up various funds especially destined for women, women in many parts of the world still end up with less - if any - access to resources.

## **Political:**

Research indicates that the type of electoral system plays an important role in determining whether or not women get properly involved on party lists or get elected[34] . Several research results indicate that Proportional Representation systems are most conducive to women's legislative presence. As indicated earlier, however, most of the information available on this issue is specific to the Western world. Moreover, it is also a case that each electoral system does not operate in a void but is affected by other cultural and economic considerations. Hence, no one particular system can be universally advocated.

The structures and agendas of political parties are another factor in considerations of women's political participation. Many political parties, reflecting the more general conditions in the rest of society, do not easily accept or promote many women into their echelons, let alone women's occupation of important positions within these parties. This issue is particularly important in view of current discussions about the overall role and functioning of political parties, and the concerns being raised about the political viability and popularity of such vehicles in the face of emerging alternative political entities, such as NGOs.

The lack of sufficient training and communication skills, or media know-how, is also extremely problematic for women in developed and developing countries alike. In the age of the media, women politicians need to use the media and be constructively used by it for purposes of positive image building, constituency creation and consolidation, as well as the dissemination of their agendas. This issue is compounded by a corresponding lack of interest on the part of the media about women politicians. "Just being a woman politician is not enough to raise interest...we need a story that is interesting and would attract attention"[35] is not an uncommon view from media personnel.

One of the defining features of global culture today and in the 21st century, is media and its sister development - information technology. The latter will emerge as perhaps the most determining variables in events in the years to come, and the capacity to own, influence and manipulate these structures will determine where and with whom power lies. Hence the importance of situating - not only women per se - but those with strong women-friendly commitment, belief, and influence within all media institutions.

Access to technology remains an imperative that only the privileged enjoy. Previously, the statement - that was almost a cliché - was that knowledge is power. Today and in the coming century, access to technology is at the basis of global power relations, and hence also a determinant feature of gender relations and women's empowerment. Today's technology determines a great deal of the availability of information, and hence, knowledge. Women who have limited access to such things as office facilities, computers (i.e. the software and the hardware), and Internet - which have become almost basic features of any office and individual in the developed world - are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of their capacity, efficiency and potential locally as well as internationally.

In sum, few of the challenges are new, but most fall into broader frameworks of culture, economics and politics. These frameworks are not rigid however, since many of the challenges overlap, e.g. culturally-determined gendered role-allocations also play a role in media reluctance to take an interest, which in turn, reflects on how popular and/or understood women's political platforms and achievements can be, and how far their impact thus is. Also, questions around the

choice of any particular electoral system are affected by the cultural and economic features of any country, as are aspects of access to technology, which are closely connected to the economic capabilities of countries. Having said that however, it remains important to note that these obstacles are not insurmountable by any means. In fact, a great deal has already been achieved as earlier sections have also indicated. The provision of international norms and the strengthening of global networking provide important tools for moving in the direction of enhancing women's political participation. The following section in particular will look at this dimension in more detail